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Draft:Alhajj Baharullah Qari

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Alhajj Baharullah Qari (1831–1929) was a Bengali Islamic scholar, teacher of Hadith, and religious educator from northern Bengal, in present-day Bangladesh. He studied at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt, and later founded the Osmanpur Bahrul Ulum Kamil Madrasah in 1928. He is remembered for his efforts to promote Islamic education and moral instruction during the late colonial period of British India.[1]

Alhajj Baharullah Qari	
Personal life	
Born	1831 Badarganj Upazila, Rangpur District, Bengal Presidency, British India
Died	1929 (aged 97–98) Badarganj Upazila, Rangpur District, Bengal Presidency, British India
Nationality	British Indian
Era	19th–20th century
Region	Bengal
Main interest(s)	Hadith, Islamic education, spirituality
Alma mater	Al-Azhar University

Early life and background

Baharullah Qari was born in 1831 in Badarganj Upazila of Rangpur District in the Bengal Presidency, then part of British India. He belonged to a religiously inclined Bengali Muslim family. From an early age, he showed an interest in religious studies and Qur'anic recitation, for which he later earned the title *Qari* (a reciter of the Qur'an).

Known for	Founding Osmanpur Bahrul Ulum Kamil Madrasah
Religious life	
Religion	Islam
Denomination	Sunni
Jurisprudence	Hanafi
Muslim leader	
Influenced by	Haji Shariatullah, Hasan al-ʿAṭṭār, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani

Education

After completing his early religious education in local madrasas of Rangpur, Baharullah Qari traveled to Cairo, Egypt, for higher studies. He was admitted to Al-Azhar University, one of the most prominent centers of Islamic learning in the Muslim world. During his time, Al-Azhar had not yet become a modern university but functioned as an international institution of Islamic scholarship.

While studying there, he came into contact with intellectual and reformist currents led by scholars such as Hasan al-ʿAṭṭār, Rifaʿa al-Tahtawi, and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani. These figures were associated with efforts to integrate classical Islamic knowledge with contemporary intellectual and educational reforms. Although there is no record of direct collaboration, Baharullah Qari's later activities in Bengal reflected similar concerns about Islamic education and community reform.

Career

After completing his studies, Baharullah Qari returned to Bengal, where he dedicated himself to teaching and spiritual guidance. He became known locally as a teacher of Hadith and Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh). His method of teaching emphasized textual understanding, moral conduct, and a disciplined approach to religious life.

He maintained correspondence and friendship with contemporary Islamic reformers, including Haji Shariatullah, founder of the Faraizi Movement. The two shared a mutual interest in reviving Islamic practices and opposing un-Islamic customs that had crept into Bengali Muslim society under colonial influence. Baharullah Qari's engagement, however, remained primarily in the fields of education and personal reform rather than organized political activity.

Establishment of Osmanpur Bahrul Ulum Kamil Madrasah

In 1928, one year before his death, Baharullah Qari established the **Osmanpur B.u. Fazil Degree Madrasah** in Osmanpur, Badarganj. The madrasa was intended as an institution for advanced Islamic learning (*Kamil* level) and became one of the earliest centers of higher religious education in northern Bengal. The curriculum reportedly followed a traditional Dars-i Nizami framework, focusing on Qur'an, Hadith, Arabic grammar, logic, and Islamic jurisprudence.

The founding of this madrasa reflected his commitment to preserving Islamic scholarship in rural Bengal at a time when Western education was expanding under British rule. The institution later produced a number of regional scholars who continued his educational mission.[2]

Teachings and influence

Baharullah Qari was known among his students for his emphasis on simplicity, spiritual discipline, and devotion to knowledge. He viewed education as a form of worship and placed strong importance on personal reform alongside academic achievement. His teachings contributed to the continuity of Islamic learning traditions in northern Bengal and inspired later madrasa networks that emerged during the 20th century.

Although his influence was primarily regional, his efforts paralleled those of other South Asian scholars who sought to maintain Islamic identity through education during the colonial period.

Death

Alhajj Baharullah Qari died in 1929 in his native village in Badarganj Upazila, Rangpur District. He was buried near the Osmanpur Bahrul Ulum Kamil Madrasah, the institution he had established a year earlier. Local oral traditions and madrasa records continue to commemorate him as its founder.

Legacy

Today, Baharullah Qari is remembered in northern Bangladesh for his role as a pioneer of Islamic education and for linking local religious instruction with global centers such as Al-Azhar University. His madrasa remains active and has evolved into a recognized Kamil-level institution under the Bangladesh Madrasa Education Board. His life reflects a broader pattern of Bengali Muslim scholars who connected the intellectual traditions of Cairo, Mecca, and Bengal during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

See also

- Haji Shariatullah
- Faraizi Movement
- Al-Azhar University
- Islamic education in Bangladesh
- Dars-i Nizami

References

1. honoursadmission.com. "Honours Admission - Destination After HSC & Equivalent" (https://www.honoursadmission.com/details-madrasah-information/Rangpur/127206/Osmanpur-B-U--Fazil-Degree-Madrasah). *Honours Admission*. Retrieved 2025-10-11.
2. "EIIN number of KAUNIA, GANGACHARA and BADARGANJ thana of RANGPUR" (http://eiinbd.blogspot.com/2015/05/eiin-number-of-kaunia-gangachara-and-BADARGANJ.html). Retrieved 2025-10-11.

External links

- Al-Azhar University on Wikipedia
- Rangpur District (Bangla Wikipedia) (https://bn.wikipedia.org/wiki/রংপুর_জেলা)

Category:1831 births Category:1929 deaths Category:People from Rangpur District Category:Al-Azhar University alumni Category:Founders of educational institutions Category:Hadith scholars Category:19th-century Indian people Category:20th-century Indian people

Islam in Bangladesh

History

Muslim conquest · Islamic rule · Bengal Sultanate · Bengal Subah · Anjuman-i-Ulama-i-Bangala

Culture

Architecture

Bangladeshi · Bengali · Indo-Islamic · Indo-Saracenic · Mughal

Literature

Arabic · Bengali (Dobhashi · Jangnama · Kissa · Marsiya · Puthi) · Persian · Urdu

Music

Ghazal · Hamd · Nashid · Naat · Qawwali · Zari · Zikir

Major figures

Bakhtiyar Khalji · Shah Jalal · Khan Jahan Ali · Shah Makhdum · Titumir · Shariatullah · Karamat Ali Jaunpuri · Sher-e-Bangla · Siraji · Nazrul · Bhashani

Communities

Bengali Muslims (Deshi · Dhakaiyas · Kan · Mahifarash · Mahimal · Nashya Shaikh · Shershabadia · Sylhetis · Rohingyas) · Bihari Muslims · Pangals

Ideology/schools of thought

Ahl-i Hadith · Barelvi/Rezvi · Deobandi/Qawmi · Fultali · Maizbhandari · Shia

Educational organizations

Alia Madrasa · Qawmi madrasa · Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board · Islamic University, Bangladesh · International Islamic University Chittagong

Political parties

Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish · Bangladesh Khilafat Andolan · Islami Andolan · Islami Front · Islami Oikya Jote · Jamaat-e-Islami · Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam · Khelafat Majlish · Muslim League · Nizam-e-Islam Party · Tariqat Federation

Influential bodies

Anjuman Mufidul Islam · Hefazat-e-Islam · Islamic Foundation Bangladesh · Tablighi Jamaat · Tamaddun Majlish

Other topics

Bishwa Ijtema · Waz Mahfil · Mosques in Bangladesh (Baitul Mukarram) · Muslim nationalism in South Asia · Muslim chronicles for Bangladeshi history · Sufism in Bangladesh

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